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The Roman Catholic Controversy.

A
LETTER TO SIR JOHN JAMES, BART.

WRITTEN IN 1741,

BY THE RIGHT REV.

GEORGE BERKELEY, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF CLOYNE ;

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AND EDITED BY

THE REV.

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CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,
PERPETUAL CURATE OF ST. GEORGE'S, BRIGHTON,
AND PREACHER OF LINCOLN'S INN.

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P R E F A C E.

THE MSS. of Bishop Berkeley, of which the following Letter is a portion, were the property of the late Rev. Hugh James Rose ; and have been kindly lent, by the widow of that faithful servant of God, to the Editor of these pages, with the view of assisting him in a History of the Colonial Church, upon which he is engaged. He has found among them several interesting memoranda relative to Berkeley's scheme of establishing a College in the Bermudas, and also notes of Sermons preached by him during his residence in Rhode Island. He gratefully acknowledges the help derived thence, towards the illustration of one of the noblest efforts of Christian zeal, which the annals of the last century exhibit.

In his examination of these papers, the Editor found several others, in a mutilated condition, of which the following Letter to Sir John James, on the Roman Catholic controversy, is the most important.

The published writings of Bishop Berkeley, which have any immediate reference to the Church of Rome, are contained in the third volume of his Works, (London, 1820,) and relate only to the duties temporal which he therein seeks to enforce. The one is a very brief Letter to the Roman Catholics who lived in his own Diocese of Cloyne, exhorting them to order and obedience, after the rebellion which had agitated Great Britain in 1745. The other is an Address, entitled ‘A Word to the Wise; or, an Exhortation to the Roman Catholic Clergy of Ireland,’ written in 1749, in which he persuades them to use their influence in correcting the many evil habits which prevailed among the Irish peasantry. The last of these Letters proved, —as the kindly spirit in which it was written could hardly fail to make it,—so acceptable to those to whom it made its appeal, that, in the Dublin Journal of November 18, 1749, they tendered publicly their thanks to Berkeley; acknowledging the justice of his censures, the wisdom and benevolence of his designs, the signal charity with which he had communicated the knowledge of them, and their desire to do what in them lay towards their completion for the common good¹.

The Editor of the following pages is not aware that, except in the above documents, and, incidentally, in one or two passages of *The Minute Philo-*

¹ Life of Bishop Berkeley prefixed to his Works, i. xiv.

sopher, any allusion, to the differences between the Church of Rome and our own, is to be met with in any of the known writings of Bishop Berkeley. Certainly, he cannot discover a single passage, which bears directly upon the doctrinal points of controversy between the Churches. When, therefore, he found among the MSS. entrusted to his hands for the special object which has been described,—and none of which, he believes, have ever been before published,—an exposition of the truth, concerning some of these points, so clear and forcible as that presented in the following Letter; clothed in the same exquisite graces of diction, which distinguish the other works of Berkeley; and breathing, in its purest form, that spirit of Christian love, which had already won for its writer the best sympathies of an admiring world; he felt that it was his duty to make others partakers of the benefit which he had derived from its perusal. He requested, therefore, and readily obtained, permission to prepare it for the press.

Some passages in it, he regrets to say, have been impaired by time; and others are totally destroyed. But, notwithstanding all its imperfections, and the apparent hopelessness of being able to supply its deficiencies from any other quarter, the Editor believes that it deserves, and will richly repay, the examination of attentive readers.

It has been said by some one of Bishop Pearson, that ‘his very dust is gold.’ The same may be

repeated, with equal truth, of the fragments which have here been carefully gathered up out of the dust of Bishop Berkeley. Many will assuredly account them precious. The voice, which here issues from the grave of a good and great man, may be listened to, and obeyed, in quarters which the pleadings and remonstrances of his living inferiors fail to reach. It speaks, in loving and solemn accents, upon some of those very subjects which agitate so powerfully the minds of many, in this day of unhappy division. And if, in any instance, it shall be found to stay the evil, by informing the understandings, and correcting the wills, of those who suffer themselves to look with coldness or with scorn upon the Church of their Baptism; and crave after a return to teaching and to practices, against which she has entered her uncompromising and faithful protest; will it not be good for them, and for others, to have heard it?

KEMP TOWN, BRIGHTON,

Sept. 25, 1850.

A
L E T T E R,
§c.

TO SIR JOHN JAMES, BART.²

Cloyne, June 7th, 1741.

DEAR SIR,

I WOULD not defer writing, though I write in no small confusion and distress; my family having many ill of an epidemical fever that rages in these parts, and I being the only physician to them and my poor neighbours³. You have my sincere

² The Editor would gladly receive more information than he has yet been able to obtain concerning Sir John James. It is evident, from the unfeigned respect for his learning, and love for his person, which Berkeley manifests, that he was no ordinary man. He was about to become a member of the Church of Rome; and his correspondence with Berkeley arose from his desire to communicate, to one with whom he had long lived in friendship, his reasons for that step. In Burke's Extinct Baronetage, a Baronet of the same name is stated to have died, without issue, soon after the date of this Letter.

³ In the Bishop's published correspondence with his friend Mr. Prior, prefixed to his Works, i. lv., occurs a passage, dated May 19, 1741, only a few weeks before this Letter, which describes the

thanks for the freedom and friendship with which you are so good to communicate your thoughts. Your making the *unum necessarium* your chief business sets you above the world. I heartily beg of God, that He would give me grace to do the same; a heart constantly to pursue the truth, and abide in it, wherever it is found.

No Divine could say, in my opinion, more for the Church of Rome than you have done :—

————— Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hâc defensa fuissent.

[Virg. *Æneid.* ii. 291.]

fearful havoc which the sickness, here alluded to, was then making in the counties of Cork and Limerick, depopulating whole villages, and making the survivors flee away in terror. No trace of perplexity or fear is exhibited on the part of the good Bishop, although his own family were among the sufferers. He describes, in the same passage, the different remedies which he had applied with the greatest success; and a comparison of these statements with the celebrated Treatise, which he wrote a few years afterwards, upon the virtues of Tar Water, entitled, 'Siris,' &c., will show that, in the work which he was now carrying on for the benefit of the sick poor of his neighbourhood and Diocese, was formed the first link of that wondrous chain of philosophical reflections, which, beginning from the simplest principles of healing applied to the relief of the body, terminated in the contemplation of the loftiest mysteries of the soul and spirit. It is remarkable, that, whilst his time was thus engrossed, and his attention thus distracted, Berkeley should have been able to write, at such length, and with such unaffected composure, upon the widely different subject which his correspondent here forced upon his attention.

The Scriptures and Fathers, I grant, are a much better help to know Christ and His Religion than the cold and dry writings of our modern Divines. Many who are conversant in such books, I doubt, have no more relish for the things of the Gospel, than those who spend their time in reading the immense and innumerable tomes of Scholastic Divinity, with which the Church of Rome abounds. The dry polemical Theology was the growth of Rome, begun from Peter Lombard, the Master of the Sentences⁴; and grew and spread among the Monks and Friars, under the Pope's eye. The Church of England is not without spiritual writers of her own. Taylor, Ken, Beveridge, Scott, Lucas, Stanhope, Nelson, the author of the works falsely ascribed to the writer of the Whole Duty of Man, and many more, whom I believe you will find not inferior to those of the Church of Rome. But I freely own to you that most modern writings smell of the age, and that there are no books so fit to make a soul advance in spiritual perfection, as the Scriptures and ancient Fathers.

I think you will find no Popery in St. Augustine, or St. Basil, or any writers of that antiquity. You may see, indeed, here and there, in the Fathers a

⁴ So called from his *Liber Sententiarum*, which was a digest in four Books of Sentences, or Propositions, extracted from the writings of the Fathers, and became the basis of the Scholastic Theology. It appeared in the year 1172.

notion borrowed from Philosophy (as they were originally philosophers); for instance, something like a Platonic or Pythagorean Purgatory: But you will see nothing like indulgences, or a bank of merits, or a Romish purgatory, whereof the Pope has the key. It is not simply believing even a Popish tenet, or tenets, that makes a Papist, but believing on the Pope's authority. There is in the Fathers a divine strain of piety, and much of the spiritual life. This, we acknowledge, all should aspire after, and I make no doubt is attainable, and actually attained, in the communion of our Church, at least as well as in any other.

You observe very justly that Christ's religion is spiritual, and the Christian life supernatural; and that there is no judge of spiritual things but the Spirit of God. We have need, therefore, of aid and light from above. Accordingly, we have the Spirit of God to guide us into all truth. If we are sanctified and enlightened by the Holy Ghost and by Christ, this will make up for our defects, without the Pope's assistance. And why our Church and her pious members may not hope for this help as well as others, I see no reason. The Author of our faith tells us, He that "will do the will of God, shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." [S. John vii. 17.] I believe this extends to all saving truths.

There is an indwelling of Christ and the Holy

Spirit ; there is an inward light. If there be an *ignis fatuus* that misleads wild and conceited men, no man can thence infer there is no light of the Sun. There must be a proper disposition of the organ, as well as a degree of daylight, to make us see. Where these concur, no body doubts of what he sees. And a Christian soul, wherein there is faith, humility, and obedience, will not fail to see the right way to salvation by that light which lightens the Gentiles, and is a glory to Israel.

There is an invisible Church, whereof Christ is the head ; the members of which are linked together by faith, hope, and charity. By faith in Christ, not in the Pope. Popes are no unerring rule, for Popes have erred : witness the condemnation and suppression of Sixtus Quintus's Bible by his successor⁵.

⁵ Reference is herein made to the Vulgate, which had been already declared by the Council of Trent to be authentic, and to the edition of it which had been prepared under the authority of Pope Sixtus V., in 1590, and commanded by him to be adopted throughout the Romish Church. This edition, notwithstanding, was condemned, and ordered to be suppressed, two years afterwards, on account of its inaccuracies, by his successor, Clement VIII. The differences between the Sixtine and Clementine editions of the Vulgate, alike promulgated by Pontiffs claiming infallibility, are of the most serious character ; some clauses are wholly omitted in the former, and inserted in the latter ; others are inserted in the former, and wholly omitted in the latter ; and, in many passages, which appear in both, the most glaring contradictions, with respect to numbers, &c., repeatedly occur. Some specimens of these, extracted from Kortholt *de Variis Scripturæ Editionibus*, are given by Mr. Hartwell Horne, in his

Witness the successions of Anti-Popes for a long tract of time ⁶.

There is a secret unction, an inward light and joy, that attends the sincere fervent love of God and His truth, which enables men to go on with all cheerfulness and hope in the Christian warfare. You ask, How I shall discern or know this? I answer much more easily than I can that this particular man, or this particular society of men, is an unerring rule. Of the former I have an inward feeling, jointly with the internal, as well as exterior, λόγος, to

Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, ii. 203—205. 3rd Edit. In Gibson's Preservative against Popery (the last Edit. v. 267), is an admirable Discourse on Tradition, by Bishop Patrick, in which, speaking of these contradictions in different, and equally authorized, editions of the Vulgate, he adds these emphatic words: 'Whereby all Romanists are reduced to this miserable necessity, either to make use of no Bible at all; or to fall under the curse of Sixtus, if he make use of that of Clement; or the curse of Clement, if he use the Bible of Sixtus. For they are both of them enjoined, with the exclusion of all other editions; and with the penalty of a curse upon them, who disobey the one or the other; and it is impossible to obey both.'

⁶ This refers to the schism in the Papacy, which took place upon the death of Gregory XI., in 1378, soon after his return from Avignon to Rome, and which distracted the Latin Church for more than forty years. Gibbon gives, in the 70th chapter of his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, a brief, but vivid, account of the miseries caused by it; and, if the reader should have the opportunity of consulting the authorities cited by him, Baluze and Muratori, he will find all his statements abundantly confirmed.

inform me. But for the latter I have only the Pope's word, and that of his followers.

It is dangerous arguing from our notion of the expediency of a thing, to the reality of the thing itself. But I can plainly argue from facts against the being of such an expedient. In the first centuries of the Church, when heresies abounded, the expedient of a Pope, or Roman oracle, was unknown, unthought of. There was then a Bishop of Rome ; but that was no hindrance or remedy of divisions. Disputes in the Catholic Church were not ended by his authority. No recourse was had to his infallibility ; an evident proof they acknowledged no such thing. The date of his usurpations, and how they grew with his secular power, you may plainly see in Giannoni's History of Naples : I do not refer you to a Protestant writer.

Men travelling in daylight see by one common light, though each with his own eyes. If one man should say to the rest, Shut your eyes and follow me, who see better than you all ; this would not be well taken. The sincere Christians of our communion are governed, or led, by the inward light of God's grace, by the outward light of His written Word, by the ancient and Catholic traditions of Christ's Church, by the ordinances of our National Church, which we take to consist all and hang together. But then we see, as all must do, with our own eyes, by a common light ; but each with his own private eyes. And so must you too, or

you will not see at all. And, not seeing at all, how can you chuse a Church? why prefer that of Rome to that of England? Thus far, and in this sense, every man's judgment is private, as well as ours. Some, indeed, go further; and, without regard to the Holy Spirit, or the Word of God, or the writings of the primitive Fathers, or the universal uninterrupted traditions of the Church, will pretend to canvass every mystery, every step of Providence, and reduce it to the private standard of their own fancy; for reason reaches not those things. Such as these, I give up and disown, as well as you do.

I grant it is meet the Law of Christ should, like other laws, have magistrates to explain and apply it. But then, as in the civil State, a private man may know the law enough to avoid transgressing it, and also to see whether the magistrates deviate from it into tyranny: even so, in the other case, a private Christian may know, and ought to know, the written law of God, and not give himself up blindly to the dictates of the Pope and his assessors. This, in effect, would be destroying the law, and erecting a despotic government in stead thereof. It would be deserting Christ, and taking the Pope for his master.

I think it my duty to become a little child to Christ and His Apostles, but not to the Pope and his courtiers. That many honest and well-meaning men live under such thralldom, I freely admit, and am sorry for it. I trust that God will have compas-

sion on them, as knowing how they were educated, and the force of first impressions. But we, who never had their education, cannot plead their prejudices.

Light and heat are both found in a religious mind duly disposed. Light, in due order, goes first. It is dangerous to begin with heat, that is, with the affections. To balance earthly affections by spiritual affections is right. But our affections should grow from inquiry and deliberation ; else there is danger of our being superstitious or enthusiasts. An affection conceived towards a particular Church, upon reading some spiritual authors of that communion, which might have left a byas in the mind, is, I apprehend, to be suspected. Most men act with a byas. God knows how far my education may have byassed me against the Church of Rome, or how far a love of retreat and a fine climate may byas me towards it. It is our duty to try and divest ourselves of all byas whatsoever.

Whatever unguarded expressions may be found in this or that Protestant Divine, it is certainly the doctrine of our Church that no particular Church, or congregation of believers, is infallible. We hold all mankind to be peccable and errable, even the Pope himself, with all that belong to him. We are like men in a cave, in this present life, seeing by a dim light through such chinks as the Divine goodness hath opened to us. We dare not talk in the high, unerring, positive style of the Romanists. We

confess that “we see through a glass darkly :” [1 Cor. xiii. 12 :] and rejoice that we see enough to determine our practice, and excite our hopes.

An humble, devout penitent believer, not byassed by any terrene affections, but sincerely aiming and endeavouring, by all the means God hath given him, to come at truth, need not fear being admitted into the Kingdom of God without the Pope’s passport. There is, indeed, an invisible Church, whereof Christ is head ; linked together by charity, animated with the same hope, sanctified by the same Spirit, heirs of the same promise. This is the Universal Church, militant and triumphant : the militant, dispersed in all parts of Christendom, partaking of the same Word and Sacraments. There are also visible, political or national, churches : none of which is Universal. It would be a blunder to say particular universal. And yet, I know not how, the style of Roman Catholic hath prevailed. The members of this universal Church are not visible by outward marks, but certainly known only to God, whose Spirit will sanctifie and maintain it to the end of time.

The Church is a calling, ἐκκλησία ; “Many are called, but few are chosen.” [S. Matt. xxii. 14.] Therefore, there is no reckoning the elect by the number of visible members. There must be the invisible grace, as well as the outward sign ; the spiritual life and holy unction, to make a real member of Christ’s invisible Church. The particular

Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, &c., have all fallen into error. [Art. XIX.] And yet, in their most corrupt and erroneous state, I believe they have included some true members of that body whereof "Christ is head;" of that building whereof He is "the corner stone." [Ephes. iv. 15; ii. 20.] "Other foundation can no man lay," but on this foundation. There may be superstructures of "hay, stubble," [1 Cor. iii. 11, 12,] and much contemptible trash, without absolutely annihilating the Church. This I take to have been evidently the case. Christ's religion is spiritual and supernatural; and there is an unseen cement of the faithful, who draw grace from the same source, are enlightened by the same "Father of lights," [James i. 17,] and sanctified by the same Spirit. And this; although they may be members of different political or visible congregations, may be estranged, or suspected, or even excommunicate to each other. They may be loyal to Christ, however divided among themselves. This is the charitable belief of the true sons of our Church; howsoever contrary to the damning temper of Rome, and the sour severity of Dissenters.

To explain this by a familiar instance. When King Charles the Second was at Brussels, he had friends in England of different factions, and suspected, or even hated, each by other; who yet alike wished the King well, and corresponded with him, though not with one another. The King knew his

loyal subjects, though they were not known, owned, or trusted mutually. They all promoted his return though by different schemes ; and, when he came to his kingdom, they all rejoiced with him.

But perhaps you will say there is need of an infallible visible guide for the soul's quiet. But of what use is an infallible guide, without an infallible sign to know him by ⁷ ? We have often seen Pope against Pope, and Council against Council ⁸. What or whom shall we follow in these contests, but the written Word of God, the Apostolical traditions, and the internal light of the λόγος, that irradiates every mind, but is not equally observed by all ? If you say, notwithstanding these helps and lights, that we are still weak, and have weak eyes ; in a word, that we may err : I say,—So may you. Man is fallible ; and God knows it ; and God is just. I am more easy on these principles, and this way of thinking, than if I tamely and slothfully gave myself up to be ridden and hoodwinked by the Pope, or by any other visible Judge upon earth.

⁷ This argument is pursued with triumphant power, by Sherlock, in his 'Brief Discourse concerning the Notes of the Church,' in refutation of Cardinal Bellarmine, and also in his 'Vindication of the Same.' These and other Tracts, which appeared originally in Gibson's Preservative, &c., have since been published in a separate and cheap volume, and are strongly recommended to the reader's notice.

⁸ Most startling and conclusive evidences of the truth of this fact are given in the first Tract in Gibson's Preservative, &c., by Bishop Stratford, i. 11—17.

The security and repose of souls is pretended, or promised, to be had in the bosom of the Roman Church. But, I think, least of all to be hoped for, in a Church which, by her doctrine of the priest's intention being necessary to the efficacy of Sacraments, must raise in every thinking member infinite and indissoluble scruples. Since it is acknowledged that many Infidels and Jews and Mahometans have been ordained, and possessed all degrees of dignity, and administered all Sacraments, in the Church of Rome: Therefore, all Sacraments, derived either mediately or immediately from such, were ineffectual: Therefore, no particular member can know, upon the principles of the Church of Rome, whether he is a Christian or not: Therefore, that very Church, which sets up above all others for making men easy and secure within her communion, is, indeed, more than any other, calculated for producing doubts and scruples, such as I do not see possible how they should be solved or quieted upon her principles.

You seem to think the numerousness of her sons an argument of her truth. But it is admitted the Mahometans are more numerous than the Christians; and that the Arians, once upon a time, were more numerous than the Orthodox. Therefore, that argument concludes nothing.

As for her miracles, which you think so well attested that thinking Protestants dare not deny them, I declare honestly that the best attested of her miracles that I have met with, and the only that

seemed to have any verisimilitude, were those said to be performed at the tomb of Abbé Paris ; and those are not admitted by the Church of Rome herself⁹. I have read, inquired, and observed myself, when abroad, concerning their exorcisms¹, and miracles ; and must needs say they all appeared so

⁹ It is hardly necessary to remark, that the claims, put forth in behalf of the miracles alleged to be wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, were revived and defended, soon after the date of this Letter, with all the skill which the accomplished sophist could exercise ; and that the refutation of them was completely established by Bishop Douglas, in his 'Criterion,' pp. 132, &c. The results of the Bishop's argument are to be found in Paley's 'Evidences of Christianity,' Prop. ii. c. ii.

¹ Berkeley had good reason to remember the pretended exorcisms of which he here speaks ; for, when he was on the Continent with the Earl of Peterborough, in 1714, he was asked by Basil Kennett, Chaplain to the English Factory at Leghorn, to preach for him one Sunday. 'The day following,' adds his biographer, 'as Berkeley was sitting in his chamber, a procession of priests in surplices, and with all other formalities, entered the room, and without taking the least notice of the wondering inhabitant, marched quite round it, muttering certain prayers. His fears immediately suggested to him, that this could be no other than a visit from the Inquisition, who had heard of his officiating before heretics without licence, the day before. As soon as they were gone, he ventured, with much caution, to inquire into the cause of this extraordinary appearance, and was happy to be informed, that this was the season appointed by the Romish Calendar for solemnly blessing the houses of all good Catholics from rats and other vermin ; a piece of intelligence which changed his terror into mirth.' Berkeley's Life prefixed to his Works, i. iv.

many gross impositions. As for the miracles said to be performed in foreign missions, I can give no credit to them (I judge by what accounts I have seen) ; and, if you will be at the trouble of perusing the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions E'trangères*, printed at Paris, perhaps you may think of them as I do.

As for the Roman Saints and Martyrs, please to read their legends, or even the canonizations of the last century, since Rome hath been enlightened and something reformed by our Reformation, for those of St. Pietro d'Alcantara and St. Magdalena de Pazzi. I believe you never read of any thing like them and their marvellous wonders, which nevertheless were admitted for authentic by Pope and Cardinals. I myself saw and conversed with a woman at Genoa, a reputed Saint, whose head I met, three years after², encircled with rays, to be sold among other pictures in the great Square of Leghorn. This same Saint appeared to me very manifestly a vile lying hypocrite, though much extolled and admired.

I never saw any character of a Popish Martyr that came up to that of Jerome of Prague, one of the first Reformers ; for which I refer you to

² Berkeley returned, in 1714, from the tour, in which he met with the adventure related in the former note ; but, soon afterwards, went upon another tour, in company with Mr. Ashe, which occupied four years. *Ib.* v. In this way, he was enabled to observe, at the intervals of time above-mentioned, the circumstances to which he refers.

Poggius, and Æneas Sylvius, who was eye-witness to his behaviour, and afterwards became Pope ³.

Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, were, I think, good men, and acted on good motives. So was Jewell a very good man. I wish you'd read his little Latin book in defence of the Reformation. I have not seen it these thirty years ; but remember I liked it well. Hooker, Usher, Dodwell, Fell, Hammond, and many more Protestants of our Church, had piety equal to their learning.

Basil Kennet[t], Chaplain to the factory of Leghorn in Queen Anne's reign, was esteemed and called a Saint by the Papists themselves, as the English merchants there assured me. On the other hand, in so many converts, and such a numerous clergy, that there may be found sundry good and learned men, I make no doubt, whose learning and piety are skillfully made use of and applied by the Court of Rome to extend her influence and credit.

You mention monasteries to have been anciently regarded as schools of Divine Philosophy. But there is, by what I can find, no similitude between ancient

³ The Council of Constance, which condemned Huss and Jerome of Prague to be burnt alive, was held in 1414 ; and Æneas Sylvius was raised to the Papal throne, in 1458, under the name of Pius II. Gibbon makes mention both of him and Poggius ; describing the former, in his 68th chapter, as one who, after he was Pope, devoted his life to the prosecution of the Turkish war which, when secretary to the Emperor, he had stated was impracticable ; and the latter, in his 65th chapter, as famous among the revivers of learning in the fifteenth century.

and modern monks. Compare what St. Bernard, in his treatise *De Vitâ Solitariâ*, saith of the monks of Thebais, with what you'll see in the monasteries of Flanders. I fear there is no corruption, or perversion, worse than that of a monastic life.

It seems very expedient that the world should have, among the many formed for action, some also formed for contemplation, the influence whereof might be general and extend to others. But to get men and women to a contemplative life, who are neither fitted nor addicted to contemplation, is a monstrous abuse. To assist the λύσις and φυγή of the Soul by meditation, was a noble purpose, even in the eyes of Pagan Philosophy⁴. How much more so in the eyes of Christians, whose philosophy is of all others the most sublime, and the most calculated to wean our thoughts from things carnal, and raise them above things terrestrial!

That the contemplative and ascetic life may be greatly promoted by living in community and by rules, I freely admit. The institution of the Essenes among the Jews, or the republic of Philosophers, that was to have been settled in a city to have been built by the direction of Plotinus⁵, in the territory

⁴ Berkeley reverts to this subject towards the end of his 'Siris,' sect. 358, where he speaks of 'The flight of the mind towards God, called by the Platonics φυγή μόνου πρὸς μόνον.'

⁵ Plotinus, a Platonic philosopher of the third century, was a native of Egypt, and a disciple of the schools of Alexandria; but repaired to Rome when he was forty years of age, and passed twenty-six years in that city and in Campania, delivering lectures and writing works on philosophy.

of Capua, if the Emperor Gallienus had not changed his mind ; such institutions as these give delightful images, but very different from any thing that I could ever see in a Popish convent ; and I have seen and known many of them.

I should like a convent without a vow, or perpetual obligation. Doubtless, a college or monastery, (not a resource for younger brothers, not a nursery for ignorance, laziness, and superstition,) receiving only grown persons of approved piety, learning, and a contemplative turn, would be a great means of improving the Divine Philosophy, and brightening up the face of religion in our Church. But I should still expect more success from a number of gentlemen, living independently at Oxford, who made divine things their study, and proposed to wean themselves from what is called the world.

You remark on the badness of men and views, that seem to have concurred in the Reformation. That there may be some truth in this charge, I will not deny. But I deny that this can be an argument against the Reformation ; since you seem to grant yourself that the Church of Rome hath been reformed on occasion of our Reformation, which yet you condemn. Evil men and councils may sometimes be the occasion of good. And it is on all hands admitted that God knows how to extract good from evil.

The charge of Idolatry on the Church of Rome (which you make so light of) is, I fear, not without foundation. For, although the learned may, and

do, distinguish between a relative respect for images, and an absolute worship of them ; yet it cannot be doubted that the use made of them becomes a great snare to the multitude. I myself, by talking to some common people in Italy, found they worshipped images with an adoration as formal and stupid as any heathen idolater. And both I, and every other traveller must see (and the best men among themselves are scandalized to see it), that the Blessed Virgin is often prayed to and more worshipped than God Himself.

You speak of the unity and peace of the Church of Rome, as an effect of the Spirit of God presiding in it, and of the doctrine of an infallible head. But the fact is denied. Successions of Anti-Popes with horrible dissensions, violent measures and convulsions ensuing thereupon, sufficiently show the contrary. The Court of Rome, it must be owned, hath learned the Venetian policy of silencing her sons, and keeping them quiet through fear. But where there breathes a little spirit of learning and freedom, as in France ; or, where distance lessened respect, as in China ; there have often appeared, and ever and anon continue to appear, great struggles, parties, and divisions, both in matters of faith and discipline. And, where they are quiet, their union seems, so far as I can judge, a political union, founded in secular power and arts, rather than an effect of any divine doctrine or spirit.

Those who are conversant in history plainly see

by what secular arts and steps the Papal power was acquired. To history, therefore, I refer you. In the mean time, I cannot forbear making one remark which I know not whether it hath been made by others. Rome seems to have cut her own throat by the forgery of Constantine's Donation⁶, in which there is this remarkable clause: *Decernentes sancimus, ut Romana Ecclesia principatum teneat tam super quatuor sedes, Alexandrinam, Antiochenam, Hierosolymitanam, ac Constantinopolitanam, quàm etiam super omnes in universo orbe terrarum Dei ecclesias*⁷.

Doth not this look like an acknowledgment that the See of Rome oweth her pre eminence to the appointment of Constantine the Great, and not to any divine right?

* * * * * [In this part of the MS., the Editor is sorry to say, four pages are wanting, and, he fears, irretrievably lost. He has supplied the partial chasms in the sequel, by words within brackets, where the context appeared fully to warrant their inser-

⁶ This forgery appeared in the eighth century, and is supposed to have been the work of Isidore. It was introduced into the world by an Epistle of Adrian I., exhorting Charlemagne to imitate the liberality, and revive the name, of the great Constantine. See Dean Comber in Gibson's Preservative, xv. 159; Gibbon, c. 49.

⁷ 'We decree and ratify, that the Roman Church hold the chief rank as well over the four Sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople, as over all the Churches of God in the whole world.'

tion ; where it seemed doubtful, he has not attempted to insert any.] * * * * *

* * * many innovations are in theirs, which we account repugnant to the Word of God, and the primitive traditions. Therefore, a Papist of any tolerable reason, though bred up in the Roman Church, may, nevertheless, with a good conscience, occasionally join in our worship ; and I have known this done. May I not therefore hope that you will continue to do it, and not, in perfect complaisance to the Pope, renounce and damn us all ? In the mean time, you may deliberate, continue your impartial inquiry, and well weigh your steps, before you range under the Pope and receive his mark.

I had forgot to say a word of Confession, which you mention as an advantage in the Church of Rome, which is not to be had in ours. But it may be had in our communion, by any who please to have it ; and, I admit, it may be very usefully practised. But, as it is managed in the Church of Rome, I apprehend it doth infinitely more mischief than good. Their casuistry seemeth a disgrace, not only to Christianity, but even to the light of nature.

As Plato thanked the Gods that he was born an Athenian, so I think it a peculiar blessing to have been educated in the Church of England. My prayer, nevertheless, and trust in God is, not that I shall live and die in this Church, but in the true Church. For, after all, in respect of religion, our

attachment should be only to the truth^s. I might, therefore, own myself a little surprised, upon observing that you concluded your letter with declaring,—You trust, by God's grace, to live and die in the Church of Rome. I can easily suppose that expression was a slip; but I can never suppose that all [the] skill and arts of Rome can destroy your candour.

You will pardon the freedom of an old friend, who speaks his thoughts bluntly, just as they come, to one who used to be [a man] of frankness without forms. If I have exceeded in this kind, impute it to haste, as well as my repetitions, inaccuracies, and want of order. You set me a time; and I have obeyed as I could; hoping that your own thought will give clearness and method to my broken and indigested hints.

To your own thoughts I appeal, trusting that God will give you grace to think for yourself, and to exert that sharpness of judgment which He has given you, with double diligence, in this most weighty affair. There are some writings of my Lord Falkland's, concerning the Infallibility of the Roman Church, bound up in the second volume of Dr. Hammond's works, together with some learned

^s The reader of the 'Siris' will remember with what energy Berkeley gives utterance to the same feeling in the last sentence: 'He that would make a real progress in knowledge, must dedicate his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first-fruits, at the altar of Truth.'

arguments in behalf of the Church of Rome. I have not read those writings; but, on the reputation of Lord Falkland, venture to recommend [them] to your perusal.

The importance of the subject, together with my esteem and affection for you, have run me into a greater length than I intended: which if you are so good as to pardon this once, I promise to be more succinct and methodical another time, if you think fit to favor me with an answer. In which case, I would intreat you to number your paragraphs with figures prefixed, which will govern and shorten my answer.

The years I have lived, the pains I have taken, and the distempers I labour under, make me suspect I have not long to live. And, certainly, my remnant of life, be it what it will, could be spun out delightfully in the sun and the fresco, among the fountains and grottos, the music, the antiquities, the fine arts and buildings of Rome, if I could once recommend myself to her religion. But I trust in God, those fla things shall never bribe my judgment. Dress therefore your batteries against my reason; attack me by the dry light * * * assign me some good reason why I should not use my reason, but submit at once to his Holiness's will and pleasure. Though you are conqueror, I shall be a gainer. In the work of truth, I am ready to hear and canvass with the best of * * * skill, whatever you shall be so good to offer.

To your kind inquiry about my health, I can say that, though I am not well, yet, I am less bad than I was a year ago ; and that . . minal disorders seem to quit me, though with a leisurely pace. [My fam]ily is a great comfort to me. My wife, who is just recovered from an illness, alwaies remembers you with the highest esteem ; and interests herself in your welfare. She sends her compliments ; but knows nothing of the subject of our correspondence. If she did, I doubt it would make her think better of the Church of Rome, in which she liked some things, when she was in France. She is become a great farmer of late. In these hard times, we employ above a hundred men every day in agriculture of one kind or other ; all which my wife directs. This is a charity, which pays itself. At least the Do-
maine of this See will gain by it. Oh ! that you had a farm of a hundred acres near Oxford ! What a pleasure it would be to improve and embellish the face of nature, to lead the life of a patriarch rather than a friar, a modern cloystered friar ! My wife finds in it a fund of health and spirits, beyond all the fashionable amusements in the world. Dear Sir, you have the best wishes and most hearty prayers of your most obedient and affectionate
Servant,

G. CLOYNE.

